



Iowa General Assembly

2014 Committee Briefings

Legislative Services Agency – Legal Services Division

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HOUSE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OVERSIGHT

Meeting Dates: [September 8, 2014](#)

Purpose. *This compilation of briefings on legislative interim committee meetings and other meetings and topics of interest to the Iowa General Assembly, written by the Legal Services Division staff of the nonpartisan Legislative Services Agency, describes committee activities or topics. The briefings were originally distributed in the Iowa Legislative Interim Calendar and Briefing. Official minutes, reports, and other detailed information concerning the committee or topic addressed by a briefing can be obtained from the committee's Internet page listed above, from the Iowa General Assembly's Internet page at <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/>, or from the agency connected with the meeting or topic described.*

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OVERSIGHT

September 8, 2014

Chairperson: Representative Kevin Koester

Vice Chairperson: Representative Greg Heartsill

Overview. The primary focus of the meeting concerned a review and discussion of administrative practices and procedures utilized by the Crime Victim Assistance Division (CVAD) of the Attorney General's Office in overseeing the distribution of funding to local and statewide crime victim service programs.

CVAD Staff. Ms. Janelle Melohn, CVAD Director, accompanied by Ms. Donna Phillips, Victim Services Support Program Administrator, and Ms. Kristi Hill, CVAD Accountant, addressed concerns which have arisen regarding transparency, consistency, and accountability in connection with administration of the CVAD. Ms. Melohn summarized the organization and operation of the CVAD, emphasizing that programs contracting with the division on a reimbursement basis are subject to extensive oversight both internally by the division and externally pursuant to site monitoring visits, and that the CVAD is subject to an annual audit by the State Auditor's Office and at least every three years by the Federal Department of Justice. She also summarized a multitiered claims review process undertaken by the division, the Attorney General's Office, and the Department of Administrative Services.

Ms. Melohn acknowledged concerns identified during the 2014 Justice System Appropriations Subcommittee process, including a lack of standardized forms, difficulty in identifying and tracking supporting documentation required in connection with a claim, and variations in reporting requirements in connection with mileage reimbursements, travel forms, and payroll, time, and attendance records. She explained that each nonprofit organization contracting with the CVAD has its own standards, practices, and procedures and that report submissions varied accordingly. Ms. Melohn additionally indicated that the CVAD recognized there was a need for increased transparency with regard to individuals and organizations outside the division, that the division is open to suggestions for improvement, and that a new orientation manual has been developed to address the concerns which have arisen and promote standardization.

Committee Discussion. Committee inquiry included the nature and length of time of Attorney General's Office oversight of the division, the extent to which administrative rules have been adopted in connection with the division and the how long they have been in place, the basis for reimbursement rate determination, the extent to which training regarding required documentation has been delivered and the form in which it has taken place, the composition of the CVAD board of directors, and the observation that no new information has been uncovered or documentation submitted since the concerns were originally expressed earlier in 2014 which would suggest that administrative problems continue to exist.

Committee members and the CVAD presenters discussed different funding sources used by CVAD to support 24 different providers offering services to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault, including services provided under contract with 22 nonprofit organizations. They also discussed the CVAD's decision to redesign programs which, according to Ms. Melohn, deemphasizes reliance on a network of shelters and instead concentrates on providing assistance, including

mobile advocacy, tailored to the needs of individual victims. Additional committee inquiry included questions regarding methods used by CVAD to accomplish the transition away from the use of shelters; program audits; and the use of reporting forms and how payments to providers are described. The committee did not make recommendations.

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